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**AN ANALYSIS OF CONTEMPORARY
RUSSO-UKRAINIAN RELATIONS
THROUGH POSITIVE PEACE AND HALO**

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An Analysis of Contemporary Russo-Ukraine Relations Through Positive Peace and Halo

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Executive Summary

Reflecting upon the principles of Positive Peace and the Halo method, this report analyzes the current Russo-Ukrainian War through the pillars of “Well Functioning Government,” “Low Levels of Corruption,” “Free Flow of Information,” and “Relations with Neighbors.” In particular, it identifies recent trends in each category both prior to and during the war, before concluding with expectations for each following the war.

The conclusion includes several recommendations for further actions in order to contribute to peace and prosperity in Eastern Europe. It provides a trend analysis, offering suggestions to promote Ukraine’s regional alliances, an acknowledgement of several important metrics for further work, a note on limiting corruption in post-war Ukraine and Russia, and a discussion of the role of soft power in Ukraine’s post-war recovery.

1. Introduction / Background:

Positive Peace:

The concept of Positive Peace was first introduced by peace and conflict expert Johan Galtung in the 1960s, and serves as a baseline measure for creating and sustaining peaceful societies.¹ Galtung distinguished two types of peace: negative and positive.² The first, does not capture a society's tendencies towards stability and harmony, and refers only to the absence of war and violence.³ The latter, Positive Peace, is understood as a more lasting peace built through economic development due to sustainable investments, and initiatives of society to continue moving forward with that peace.⁴ In a more complex sentiment, according to the Positive Peace Report in 2022, "Positive Peace is defined as the attitudes, institutions, and structures that create and sustain peaceful societies."⁵

Positive Peace comprises eight foundational pillars: A well-functioning government, sound business environment, low levels of corruption, the acceptance of the rights of others, high levels of human capital, good relations with neighboring regions, the free flow of information, and the equitable distribution of resources.⁶ The Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) uses these different pillars to develop an index that helps determine social development known as the Positive Peace Index or PPI.⁷ Elevated levels of Positive Peace are correlated with "robust" economies, augmented well-being, strengthened social cohesion, and increased contentment with living standards.⁸ Positive Peace also acts as a means of increasing a society's resilience or ability to absorb shock in the presence of a potential conflict.⁹ Nations boasting a Positive Peace surplus typically witness subsequent decade-long improvements in peace and development, emphasizing its prophetic role.¹⁰

Recent global trends reveal a 2.4% increase in Positive Peace between 2009 and 2020, primarily propelled by an 8% upswing in "technological and economic foundations."¹¹ This increase in popularity, both in the academic, but also political spheres, has contributed to the development and implementation of ideas for Positive Peace in different countries.¹²

¹ Institute for Economics & Peace. Positive Peace Report 2022: Analysing the factors that build, predict and sustain peace, Sydney, January 2022. Available from: <http://visionofhumanity.org/resources> (accessed 14 February 2024)

² Institute for Economics & Peace. "Positive Peace Report 2022". "Johan Galtung and the Quest to Define the Concept of Peace," Vision of Humanity, December 14, 2020, <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/introducing-the-concept-of-peace/>.

³ Institute for Economics & Peace. "Positive Peace Report 2022".

⁴ Institute for Economics & Peace. "Positive Peace Report 2022".

⁵ Institute for Economics & Peace. "Positive Peace Report 2022". 4

⁶ Institute for Economics & Peace. "Positive Peace Report 2022"

⁷ Institute for Economics & Peace. "Positive Peace Report 2022"

⁸ Institute for Economics & Peace. "Positive Peace Report 2022" 4

⁹ Institute for Economics & Peace. "Positive Peace Report 2022".

¹⁰ Institute for Economics & Peace. "Positive Peace Report 2022"

¹¹ Institute for Economics & Peace. "Positive Peace Report 2022"

¹² Institute for Economics & Peace. "Positive Peace Report 2022".

Nevertheless, challenges persist, particularly in domains such as attitudes, where surging political polarization and diminishing trust in governance have fueled deterioration.¹³ Zooming into specific country contexts, as of 2022, Ukraine secures the 74th spot in Positive Peace, trailing Russia at 71st.¹⁴ Critically, the United States has grappled with a disconcerting 17.6% decay in its Positive Peace Index Overall Score from 2009 to 2020, with a pronounced decline post-2015.¹⁵ This descent is ascribed to worsening figures in the "Attitudes and Institutions" domains.¹⁶

Halo Framework:

The Halo framework is a valuable tool for analyzing social systems.¹⁷ It works to identify how a society functions and evolves and characterizes the conditions conducive for social change and progress.¹⁸ Thus, in the case of the IEP, it helps understand ways in which leaders or policymakers can enhance peace and societal resilience.¹⁹ Halo generally aims to offer a more "comprehensive approach" to analyzing the factors that contribute to overall societal stability.²⁰

The Halo framework uses multiple indicators to understand social behavior.²¹ One of these is the stocks and flows in a system, where stocks represent the state of various components (e.g., population, finances), and flows indicate movements between them (e.g., money transfers, immigration).²² Encoded norms on the other hand represent the "formal and informal rules" governing social behavior.²³ These norms aim to gauge stability or homeostasis within a system.²⁴ Notably, the reaction of different nations to the same stimulus can vary due to these encoded norms.²⁵ Furthermore, the idea of "Path Dependency", as highlighted in the PPR 2020, suggests that a country's future developmental trajectories are influenced by its historical path.²⁶ Through its indicators and specifications, Halo recognizes that emergent properties become crucial as systems evolve through time, emphasizing the need to understand future trajectories.²⁷ The overall goal of applying the Halo framework with the consideration of Positive Peace is to offer insight into the complex dynamics within and between systems through a standardized

¹³ Institute for Economics & Peace. "Positive Peace Report 2022"

¹⁴ Institute for Economics & Peace. "Positive Peace Report 2022"

¹⁵ Institute for Economics & Peace. "Positive Peace Report 2022"

¹⁶ Institute for Economics & Peace. "Positive Peace Report 2022"

¹⁷ Institute for Economics & Peace. "Positive Peace Report 2022"

¹⁸ Institute for Economics & Peace. "Positive Peace Report 2022"

¹⁹ Institute for Economics & Peace. "Positive Peace Report 2022"

²⁰ Institute for Economics & Peace. "Positive Peace Report 2022" 4

²¹ Institute for Economics & Peace. "Positive Peace Report 2022"

²² Institute for Economics & Peace. "Positive Peace Report 2022"

²³ Institute for Economics & Peace. "Positive Peace Report 2022" 2

²⁴ Institute for Economics & Peace. "Positive Peace Report 2022"

²⁵ Institute for Economics & Peace. "Positive Peace Report 2022".

²⁶ Institute for Economics & Peace. "Positive Peace Report 2022"

²⁷ Institute for Economics & Peace. "Positive Peace Report 2022"

approach.²⁸ Moreover, the combination of Halo and Positive Peace as foundations for understanding systems experiencing conflict suggests that optimal systematic change occurs in the presence of widespread incremental efforts as opposed to few but radical alterations.²⁹

2. Methodology

In this report, we combine both of these approaches to analyze the Russo-Ukrainian Conflict. In particular, we selected the pillars of “Well Functioning Government,” “Low Levels of Corruption”, “Free Flow of Information”, and “Relations with Neighbors” within the framework of Positive Peace. We chose these particular pillars due to the multifaceted understanding of the conflict they provide, ranging from local actors within Ukraine to the international community. The exclusion of the remaining pillars was not an assessment of their relevance, but rather a conscious choice to hone in and specialize on these particular pillars. Hence, our research approach anchors these pillars in various components of the Halo framework such as path dependency, stocks and flows, encoded norms, and system archetypes. We also apply other international metrics such as the Corruption Perception Index, the Positive Peace Index, and adherence to human rights conventions to further justify our analysis of Russo-Ukrainian dynamics. In this approach, the Positive Peace pillars functioned as a foundation from which Halo metrics could provide newer and more qualitative insight. Path dependency in particular proved to be an important metric, which led to us dividing our research for each pillar into before, during and after the start of the Russo-Ukrainian war.

The following section is dedicated to analyzing the dynamics of the conflict, reflecting on the events that contributed to the current state of the conflict.

3. Research Findings

1. Well Functioning Government

1.1 Pre-War

The Russia-Ukraine conflict inherently involves several deep-rooted issues surrounding the Ukrainian identity and the Russian detestation of it.³⁰ In particular, Vladimir Putin's narrative “emphasiz[es] the deep-seated unity among the Eastern Slavs – Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians,” implying a shared “political destiny.”³¹ This has fueled the otherization of the

²⁸ Institute for Economics & Peace. “Positive Peace Report 2022”

²⁹ Institute for Economics & Peace. “Positive Peace Report 2022”

³⁰ Karina Korostelina and Gerard Toal, “The Dynamics of Identity in Ukrainians Living at the Front | Wilson Center,” Wilson Center, June 21, 2023,

<https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/dynamics-identity-ukrainians-living-front>; Jeffrey Mankoff. "Russia's War in Ukraine: Identity, History, and Conflict." Center for Strategic and International Studies, April 22, 2022.

<https://www.csis.org/analysis/russias-war-ukraine-identity-history-and-conflict>.

³¹ Mankoff. "Russia's War in Ukraine: Identity, History, and Conflict."

Ukrainian identity and formed Ukrainian and Belarusian identities as merely products of the West rather than as unique ethnic groups with long histories.³² This also plays a major role in the fact that much of Putin's policy relationship with Ukraine and Belarus relied on the assumption that their national identities were "fragile."³³ However, Ukraine's unique ability to develop strong connections with the West and in consolidating Ukrainian civic identity displays the strength of its well-functioning government.³⁴

1.2 During War

The attempt to restore Ukraine's territorial integrity displays the capability for the effective upholding of the rule of law. This demonstrates Ukraine's alignment with a well-functioning government because territorial integrity is closely related with the ability to peacefully resolve disputes and follows principles of sovereignty.³⁵ Though much of Ukraine is under damage from the war, the Ukrainian government is able to implement a rapid recovery program.³⁶ This has set Ukraine up for successful management of the country's recovery and governance process.³⁷

The cost of reconstruction following the conflict has been estimated at around \$486 Billion.³⁸ International support is crucial in rebuilding infrastructure. The Brookings Institute highlighted how Ukraine's international community is interested in more meaningful funding in the sense that donors are coordinating reconstruction efforts.³⁹ This gives Ukraine the unique opportunity to work with efficient costs.⁴⁰ In other words, Ukraine is able to not only receive immense funding, but also is given the guidance on what to do with that money. Thus, international institutions are helping build a well-functioning government in Ukraine. This coordinated approach to helping Ukraine's recovery resonates with the themes of governance effectiveness and communal identity, underscoring the importance of Ukraine leveraging

³² Mankoff. "Russia's War in Ukraine: Identity, History, and Conflict."

³³ Mankoff. "Russia's War in Ukraine: Identity, History, and Conflict."

³⁴ Korostelina and Toal, "The Dynamics of Identity in Ukrainians Living at the Front"; Mankoff. "Russia's War in Ukraine: Identity, History, and Conflict."

³⁵ Institute for Economics & Peace. "Positive Peace Report 2022"

³⁶ "Updated Ukraine Recovery and Reconstruction Needs Assessment Released," World Bank, February 15, 2024, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2024/02/15/updated-ukraine-recovery-and-reconstruction-needs-assessment-released>.

³⁷ "One Year Later: Helping Ukraine Win the War and Build Lasting Peace | Fact Sheet," U.S. Agency for International Development, February 17, 2023, <https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/fact-sheets/feb-2023-one-year-later-helping-ukraine-win-war-and-build-lasting-peace>.

³⁸ "Ukraine recovery and reconstruction: \$486 billion over the next decade." UN News. United Nations. 15 February 2024. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/02/1146562>

³⁹ Dave Skidmore, David Wessel, and Elijah Asdourian. "Financing and Governing the Recovery, Reconstruction, and Modernization of Ukraine." Brookings, November 3, 2022. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/financing-and-governing-the-recovery-reconstruction-and-modernization-of-ukraine/>.

⁴⁰ Skidmore et al. "Financing and Governing the Recovery, Reconstruction, and Modernization of Ukraine."

international support without falling into unsustainable debt. It also approaches the situation in Ukraine as prioritizing strength of its people and civic identity at the forefront amidst external aggression.⁴¹

In examining the evolving dynamics of identity among Ukrainians enduring the conflict, it is clear that identity transformation plays an important role in the landscape of peacebuilding. The relationship between Russia and Ukraine has reshaped geographical and political boundaries while also shifting the Ukrainian citizen's perception of their national and cultural identity.⁴² Identity shifts are pivotal for fostering peace in the region, since it encourages individuals and communities to move beyond historical grievances and lay a foundation for a positive outlook on the future. Grievances can play a role in mobilizing identity and creating policy shifts that can influence reconciliation.⁴³ These transformations all play a role in developing a strategy to promote and support the well-functioning government pillar. Identity promotes unity and cooperation, and Ukraine can eventually work towards a cohesive society and finally experiencing lasting peace.

The SHARP Wave 2 report displays a lot of the way Ukraine's society has resisted the war's efforts to push them down.⁴⁴ Ukraine's resilience and civic engagement denotes how engaged Ukrainian citizens remain and how Positive Peace efforts continue to be an effective way to deal with the war.⁴⁵ In this case, civic engagement includes both voting efforts and charitability of citizens – with 83% of individuals reporting that they regularly vote in elections.⁴⁶ This is also evident in the way that national mobilization and civic society continues to prosper in Ukraine.⁴⁷ Regardless of the Ukrainian or Russian-speaking citizens, individuals have grown up in an independent Ukraine and the country has still maintained a robust democracy. This undermines Russian attempts to assert control over the region and displays the resilience of the Ukrainian people.

2. Levels of Corruption

2.1 Pre-War

Observing causes for the beginning of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, an outstanding trend was the fact that both countries were not able to control levels of corruption inside governmental

⁴¹ Korostelina and Toal, "The Dynamics of Identity in Ukrainians Living at the Front"; Mankoff. "Russia's War in Ukraine: Identity, History, and Conflict."

⁴² Korostelina and Toal, "The Dynamics of Identity in Ukrainians Living at the Front"

⁴³ "Roots of the Human Dimension: Understanding Historical Grievances as Context for Conflict." The Strategy Bridge, November 29, 2014.

<https://thestrategybridge.org/the-bridge/2014/11/29/roots-of-the-human-dimension-understanding-historical-grievances-as-context-for-conflict>.

⁴⁴ Nadiia Novosolova and Marian Machlouzarides, "SHARP WAVE 2: BIG PICTURE REPORT," 2023, https://api.scoreforpeace.org/storage/pdfs/REP_PFRUkr21_SHARP-Big-picture-report_v11.pdf.

⁴⁵ Novosolova and Machlouzarides, "SHARP WAVE 2: BIG PICTURE REPORT,"

⁴⁶ Novosolova and Machlouzarides, "SHARP WAVE 2: BIG PICTURE REPORT,"

⁴⁷ Novosolova and Machlouzarides, "SHARP WAVE 2: BIG PICTURE REPORT,"

and public institutions.⁴⁸ According to the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), Russia averaged 29 out of 100 and Ukraine averaged 32 prior to the war, with a higher score indicating less corruption.⁴⁹ Therefore, it is possible to analyze that both countries, at that point in time, did not have the best conditions for the development of a just and egalitarian society.⁵⁰ High levels of corruption within a society goes against one of the pillars of Positive Peace, which suggests that low levels of corruption are necessary for sustaining peaceful societies.⁵¹ Thus, this likely served as another driving factor that set the ground for the advancement of conflict between the two countries.

Before the most recent continuation of the war in 2022, Ukraine had been trying, and succeeding, in bringing corruption levels down annually: Ukraine was able to move from a rank of 144 to 104 and add 10 points to its CPI in a span of about 10 years.⁵² However, the persistence of corruption, as evidenced by CPI data, underscores the critical need for comprehensive anti-corruption measures as integral components of advancing Positive Peace and mitigating geopolitical tensions. Without meaningful efforts to combat corruption and promote transparency and accountability, the prospects for sustainable peace and stability in the region remain uncertain.

2.2 During War

In the case of Ukraine and Russia, if we observe the development of the Transparency International's latest CPI, there seems to be little correlation between the years of conflict and the average corruption ranking in both counties.⁵³ What this means is that, if we look just at the numbers, there would be little indication of the major conflict happening among the two countries.⁵⁴ However, the index does not take into account the corruption scandals that have been happening in both countries since the 2023 CPI was released.

There have been numerous corruption crises in Russia and in Ukraine. Most recently, Ukraine's Minister of Agriculture offered to resign from his position in response to corruption

⁴⁸ Mark Green. "Ukrainian Corruption, Russian Corruption | Wilson Center." Wilson Center, October 17, 2023. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/ukrainian-corruption-russian-corruption>.

⁴⁹ "2021 Corruption Perceptions Index - Explore the Results," Transparency.org, January 25, 2022, <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2021>.

⁵⁰ Green. "Ukrainian Corruption, Russian Corruption"

⁵¹ "Vision of Humanity. "Positive Peace Index | The Most and Least Resilient Countries in the World," 2022. <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/maps/positive-peace-index/>.

⁵² Transparency.org. "2023 Corruption Perceptions Index - Explore Ukraine's Results," January 30, 2024. <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2023>.; "2012 Corruptions Perceptions Index - Explore the Results," Transparency.org, January 30, 2024, <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2012>.

⁵³ Transparency.org. "2023 Corruption Perceptions Index: Explore the Results," January 30, 2024. <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2023>.

⁵⁴ Peter Dickinson. "Wartime Ukraine Ranks among World's Top Performers in Anti-Corruption Index - Atlantic Council." Atlantic Council, February 1, 2024. <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/wartime-ukraine-ranks-among-worlds-top-performers-in-anti-corruption-index/>.

allegations.⁵⁵ Moreover, corrupt officials stole about \$40 million, the result of a contract for artillery shells worth 1.5 billion hryvnias (\$39.6 million) with arms firm Lviv Arsenal.⁵⁶ In Russia, Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu's deputy was detained with the possibility of facing 15 years in jail if convicted.⁵⁷

This corruption crisis has only damaging effects, given the prominence of international support, such as the United States in the case of Ukraine.⁵⁸ Corruption remains endemic in both Ukraine and Russia even though new anti-corruption approaches have been put in place.⁵⁹ However, Ukraine, since launching the new High Anti-Corruption Court in late 2023, has convicted 157 government officials and other perpetrators, a reflection of its great strides combating corruption.⁶⁰

3. Free Flow of Information

3.1 Pre War

The history of Russia and Ukraine is a rather complex issue rooted strongly in the identity of Ukraine as a nation, which has caused a number of other challenges. From the banning of Ukrainian language and media in Soviet Ukraine schools, to more recent disruption of media networks within Ukraine, the two nations path dependency based on the flow of information has strongly developed their current state of affairs.⁶¹

Dating back to the 1860s, Ukrainian, or called "Little Russian" by Russians, was limited by what is known as the Valuev Circular.⁶² Implemented by Russian Minister, Petr Aleksandrovich Valuev, the suppression of Ukrainian started as banning literature to the common

⁵⁵RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service. "Ukraine's Agriculture Minister Offers to Resign After Corruption Allegations." RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty, April 25, 2024.

<https://www.rferl.org/a/ukraine-corruption-agriculture-resignation-solskiy/32920843.html>.

⁵⁶AP News. "Officials Stole \$40 Million Meant to Buy Arms for the War with Russia, Ukraine Says | AP News," January 28, 2024. <https://apnews.com/article/ukraine-russia-war-corruption-476d673cc64a4b005c7ee8ed5f5d5361>.

⁵⁷ Reuters. "Russia Detains Ally of Defense Minister Shoigu, Alleging Corruption." NBC News, April 24, 2024. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/russia-ukraine-war-deputy-defense-minister-detained-corruption-shoigu-rcna149114>.

⁵⁸ Nahal Toosi, "Leaked U.S. Strategy on Ukraine Sees Corruption as the Real Threat," POLITICO, October 2, 2023, <https://www.politico.com/news/2023/10/02/biden-admin-ukraine-strategy-corruption-00119237>.; Skidmore et al. "Financing and Governing the Recovery, Reconstruction, and Modernization of Ukraine."

⁵⁹ Transparency.org. "2023 Corruption Perceptions Index: Explore the Results," January 30, 2024. <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2023>.

⁶⁰Adrian Karatnycky. "How Deep Does Corruption Run in Ukraine?" Foreign Policy, March 6, 2024. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/03/06/ukraine-corruption-reforms-russia-war/>.; Dickinson. "Wartime Ukraine Ranks among World's Top Performers in Anti-Corruption Index"

⁶¹ Michael Flier and Andrea Graziosi. "The Battle for Ukrainian: An Introduction." *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 35 (2018 2017): 11–30.; Vera Bergengruen, "The Battle for Control over Ukraine's Internet," Time, October 18, 2022, <https://time.com/6222111/ukraine-internet-russia-reclaimed-territory/>.

⁶² Flier and Graziosi. "The Battle for Ukrainian: An Introduction."

people.⁶³ Although this was not an official law, it was successful in repressing the language until the Russian Revolution in 1905, hindering a large part of the Ukrainian identity.⁶⁴

In more recent times, the US Government has worked closely with Ukraine to provide over 38 million dollars in funding towards improving cybersecurity measures prior to February 2022.⁶⁵ With this funding, a cybersecurity reform program was launched to help bolster the infrastructure necessary to respond to both cyber and physical attacks on hardware and networks.⁶⁶ Furthermore, this program also helped to improve cyber programs in Ukrainian universities, strengthen the cyber workforce, connect essential infrastructure workers with private sectors to ensure knowledgeable solutions and, overall, build resilience against cyber interference.⁶⁷ Similarly, there was support from the US Treasury, Department of Energy, and US Cyber Command to establish insurance over Ukrainian financial services, and be able to continue developing resilience efforts for possible future events.⁶⁸

3.2 During War

Over the last 100 years, we see this hindrance of free flow of information has been developed into a modern-day issue regarding more advanced technology and systems of networks. When Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, it cut Ukrainians access to internet and network services by destroying over 4,000 Ukrainian telecommunication bases and “more than 60,000 km of fiber-optic lines” dedicated to internet access.⁶⁹ If the internet was accessible, some Southern regions of Ukraine found their networks had been rerouted to Russian providers, allowing for censorship and surveillance.⁷⁰ More specifically, the city of Kherson gave complete telecommunications control over to Russian soldiers when threatened, blocking Ukrainians from access to a number of social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and cellular networks.⁷¹ These cellular services were rerouted to Russian services.⁷² For years, Russia has been pushing their agenda of media blockades and censorship in Ukraine and has been successful in many ways.⁷³ Some areas within Ukraine have experienced complete blackouts, with no access to cellular services mostly in the Eastern and Southern regions due to destruction

⁶³ Johannes Remy. “The Valuev Circular and Censorship of Ukrainian Publications in the Russian Empire (1863-1876): Intention and Practice.” *Canadian Slavonic Papers / Revue Canadienne Des Slavistes* 49, no. 1/2 (2007): 87–110. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40871165>.

⁶⁴Remy. “The Valuev Circular and Censorship of Ukrainian Publications”

⁶⁵US Department of State. “U.S. Support for Connectivity and Cybersecurity in Ukraine - United States Department of State,” May 10, 2022. <https://www.state.gov/u-s-support-for-connectivity-and-cybersecurity-in-ukraine/>.

⁶⁶ “U.S. Support for Connectivity and Cybersecurity in Ukraine.”

⁶⁷ “U.S. Support for Connectivity and Cybersecurity in Ukraine.”

⁶⁸ “U.S. Support for Connectivity and Cybersecurity in Ukraine.”

⁶⁹ Bergengruen, “The Battle for Control over Ukraine’s Internet”

⁷⁰ Bergengruen, “The Battle for Control over Ukraine’s Internet”

⁷¹ Adam Satariano and Scott Reinhard, “How Russia Took over Ukraine’s Internet in Occupied Territories,” *The New York Times*, August 9, 2022, sec. Technology, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/08/09/technology/ukraine-internet-russia-censorship.html>.

⁷² Satariano and Reinhard, “How Russia Took over Ukraine’s Internet in Occupied Territories”

⁷³ Bergengruen, “The Battle for Control over Ukraine’s Internet”

by Russians forces, whereas others have limited access or only access to Russians networks.⁷⁴ The censorship of media and lack of communication has caused confusion in understanding the current affairs between Ukraine and Russia as well as uprooted peace amongst its people as they are left without access to communication with family and friends.⁷⁵

In the modern era of technology and rapid advancement of artificial intelligence, governments also face a new reality of combating interference. With the use of American AI firms, Ukraine has been successful in using artificial intelligence to recognize Russian spies by utilizing algorithms to pick-up on pools of data within phone records.⁷⁶ AI can be used to spread disinformation and propaganda, however it can also be used to counteract these messages by recognizing bots and misinformation.⁷⁷

While the effects of media intervention can be detrimental, Ukraine has not stood down to Russian interception.⁷⁸ With the assistance of the US, a number of agencies have partnered to bring assistance to Ukrainians.⁷⁹ Over 6,750 emergency communication devices, necessary for governmental officials and essential service providers, have been provided by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) since the invasion of Ukraine in 2022.⁸⁰ Additionally, the Federal Bureau of Investigation has partnered with Ukrainian national security officers and law enforcement to help prevent and limit harmful cyber activity and future breachment of Ukrainian media.⁸¹

4. Good Relations with Neighbors

4.1 Pre-War

When analyzing the key aspects of pre-war Russian and Ukrainian national systems, it is particularly important to review the path dependency of the two countries. The history of the two countries and the recent sovereignty of Ukraine have much to do with the tension that culminated in the deadly war we see today.⁸² The instability of livelihoods in the state of Russia following 2012 arguably led to leaders creating external uniting “threats,” such as campaigns against LGBTQ persons and “NGOs raising foreign funding.”⁸³ One could also point to fears of growing

⁷⁴ Satariano and Reinhard, “How Russia Took over Ukraine’s Internet in Occupied Territories”

⁷⁵ Satariano and Reinhard, “How Russia Took over Ukraine’s Internet in Occupied Territories”

⁷⁶ Roy Lindelauf, Herwin Meerveld, and Marie Postma, “Leveraging Decision Support in the Russo-Ukrainian War: The Role of Artificial Intelligence,” *Atlantisch Perspectief* 47, no. 1 (2023): 36–41.

⁷⁷ Lindelauf et al. “Leveraging Decision Support in the Russo-Ukrainian War: The Role of Artificial Intelligence.”

⁷⁸ “U.S. Support for Connectivity and Cybersecurity in Ukraine.”

⁷⁹ “U.S. Support for Connectivity and Cybersecurity in Ukraine.”

⁸⁰ “U.S. Support for Connectivity and Cybersecurity in Ukraine.”

⁸¹ “U.S. Support for Connectivity and Cybersecurity in Ukraine.”

⁸² Jacobus Delwaide. “Review of ‘Roots of Russia’s War in Ukraine.’” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 35, no. 1–4 (2018 2017): 550–53. 552; Seán Molloy. “Hierarchy and Status: A Response.” *International Politics* 60, no. 1 (February 2023): 236–44. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41311-022-00412-w>.

⁸³Delwaide. “Review of ‘Roots of Russia’s War in Ukraine.’”

Western hegemony as a reason for Russia's growing hostility towards Ukraine.⁸⁴ In speeches from high-level Kremlin officials, a consistent theme surfaces—the evaluation of the West's position and a simultaneous effort to rectify what is perceived as Russia's diminished stature in the post-Cold War era.⁸⁵ This narrative becomes a driving force behind Russia's stance on Ukraine.⁸⁶ Molloy thus argues that, according to Russia, Ukraine's divergence is not only a direct challenge to them, but is compounded by the Western world's “contemptuous” attitude.⁸⁷ Russia fears that allowing these dual challenges from Ukraine and the West to converge would trigger a “catastrophic collapse,” akin to historical setbacks such as seen with the Soviet Union.⁸⁸ Consequently, safeguarding Russia's status as an equal to the West and as a superior power to Ukraine emerges as a critical and existential necessity for their statehood.⁸⁹

Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the complexities of this relationship were further deepened by the Budapest Memorandum.⁹⁰ In exchange for relinquishing its expansive nuclear arsenal, Ukraine received assurances of sovereignty and security from both Western powers and Russia.⁹¹ This historical juncture created a path dependency where the power dynamics, geopolitical considerations, and national interests of both countries became intertwined. The agreement, while initially aimed at fostering stability, failed to prevent subsequent tensions and conflicts.⁹² The divergence in interpretations and commitments under the Budapest Memorandum has contributed to the erosion of trust between the two nations.⁹³

Ukraine first made its intentions to join NATO known in 2002, and in 2006 President Victor Yushchenko began calling for a NATO membership action plan (MAP).⁹⁴ These progressive moves towards membership likely increased tension between Russia and Ukraine.⁹⁵ Russian officials view Ukraine's NATO membership as a cause for war, with Russia's deputy secretary of the Security Council even saying, “Kyiv is well aware that such a step would mean a guaranteed escalation to World War Three.”⁹⁶ This direct threat conveys the level of discontent Putin has for the idea of Ukraine in NATO.

⁸⁴Molloy. “Hierarchy and Status: A Response.”

⁸⁵ Molloy. “Hierarchy and Status: A Response.”

⁸⁶ Molloy. “Hierarchy and Status: A Response.”

⁸⁷ Molloy. “Hierarchy and Status: A Response.” 243

⁸⁸ Molloy. “Hierarchy and Status: A Response.” 243

⁸⁹ Molloy. “Hierarchy and Status: A Response.” 243

⁹⁰Mariana Budjeryn and Matthew Bunn. “Budapest Memorandum at 25: Between Past and Future,” March 2020. <https://www.hks.harvard.edu/publications/budapest-memorandum-25-between-past-and-future>.

⁹¹ Budjeryn and Bunn, “Budapest Memorandum at 25: Between Past and Future,”

⁹² Budjeryn and Bunn, “Budapest Memorandum at 25: Between Past and Future,”

⁹³ Budjeryn and Bunn, “Budapest Memorandum at 25: Between Past and Future,”

⁹⁴ Steven Pifer. “NATO's Ukraine Challenge.” Brookings, June 6, 2019.

<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/natos-ukraine-challenge/>.

⁹⁵ Pifer. “NATO's Ukraine Challenge.”

⁹⁶ Guy Faulconbridge and Lidia Kelly, “Russian Official Warns of World War Three If Ukraine Joins NATO | Reuters,” Reuters, October 13, 2022,

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/admission-ukraine-nato-can-lead-third-world-war-russian-official-2022-10-13/>.

Analyzing the path dependencies in Russian sentiments toward Ukrainian independence provides valuable insights into the dynamics shaping Positive Peace, specifically in terms of "Good relations with neighbors." The IEP underscores the importance of "harmonious relations with other countries" in fostering a peaceful environment.⁹⁷ Given examples like threats of World War Three, relations between Ukraine and Russia are anything but harmonious.

4.2 During War

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the geopolitical landscape in Eastern Europe has undergone significant shifts, particularly concerning Ukraine's relations with its neighbors.⁹⁸ It is imperative to examine how Ukraine's relationships with neighboring countries, a pillar of Positive Peace, have evolved in the aftermath of the invasion.

Following Russia's invasion, Ukraine's relations with its immediate neighbors have been marked by both solidarity and strategic recalibration.⁹⁹ Poland, for instance, has had a significant role in rallying European support for Ukraine, showcasing a notable strengthening of ties between the two countries.¹⁰⁰

In contrast, Ukraine's relations with Belarus have deteriorated significantly.¹⁰¹ Following the invasion, Belarusian President Lukashenko offered political and military support to Moscow.¹⁰² The alignment of Belarus with Russia underscores the complex dynamics at play in the region, where geopolitical allegiances can quickly reshape bilateral ties.¹⁰³ Relations with Moldova, another neighbor of Ukraine, have seen mixed developments.¹⁰⁴ A Gallup article highlights Moldova's declaration of support for Ukrainian migrants.¹⁰⁵ However, Moldova's vulnerability to Russian influence, given the presence of Russian troops in the Transnistrian

⁹⁷ Institute for Economics & Peace. "Positive Peace Report 2022" 9

⁹⁸ Jill Lawless. 2023. "Global impact: 5 ways war in Ukraine has changed the world." *AP News*, February 22, 2023. <https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-war-5-things-c183ddfe6c140393464d3e0c3828c328>; Ecaterina Locoman. "What's Next for Ukraine's (and Its Neighbors') Domestic and Foreign Policy? - Foreign Policy Research Institute," June 7, 2022.

<https://www.fpri.org/article/2022/06/whats-next-for-ukraines-and-its-neighbors-domestic-and-foreign-policy/>; Jonathan Masters, "The Belarus-Russia Alliance: An Axis of Autocracy in Eastern Europe," Council on Foreign Relations, September 27, 2023,

<https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/belarus-russia-alliance-axis-autocracy-eastern-europe>; Temur Umarov, "Russia and Central Asia: Never Closer, or Drifting Apart?," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, December 23, 2022, <https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/88698>.

⁹⁹Lawless. "Global impact: 5 ways war in Ukraine has changed the world."

¹⁰⁰Lawless. "Global impact: 5 ways war in Ukraine has changed the world."

¹⁰¹ Locoman. "What's Next for Ukraine's (and Its Neighbors') Domestic and Foreign Policy?"; Masters, "The Belarus-Russia Alliance: An Axis of Autocracy in Eastern Europe"

¹⁰² Locoman. "What's Next for Ukraine's (and Its Neighbors') Domestic and Foreign Policy?"; Masters, "The Belarus-Russia Alliance: An Axis of Autocracy in Eastern Europe"

¹⁰³ Masters, "The Belarus-Russia Alliance: An Axis of Autocracy in Eastern Europe"

¹⁰⁴ Locoman. "What's Next for Ukraine's (and Its Neighbors') Domestic and Foreign Policy?"

¹⁰⁵ Andrew Dugan. 2023. "Ukraine's Neighbors Grow More Accepting of Migrants." Gallup News. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/471146/ukraine-neighbors-grow-accepting-migrants.aspx>.

region, may have limited the extent of its support for Ukraine.¹⁰⁶ Despite shared aspirations for EU integration, Moldova's precarious position complicates its ability to offer substantial assistance to Ukraine.¹⁰⁷

Ukraine's relations with Central Asian states have also witnessed notable changes following Russia's invasion.¹⁰⁸ Traditionally aligned with Russia, these states have faced pressure to navigate their geopolitical positioning amidst the conflict.¹⁰⁹ Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, in particular, have signaled a departure from their traditional allegiance to Russia.¹¹⁰ This is highlighted by their declarations of support for Ukraine's territorial integrity and rejection of Russian aggression.¹¹¹ Moreover, Central Asian states are an attractive option for businesses leaving Russia due to sanctions, indicating a strategic recalibration of economic ties away from Moscow.¹¹² Their formal security and economic treaties with Russia remain a complicating factor in fully aligning with Ukraine, however, as since the most recent invasion the majority region has been “adhering to western sanctions” levied against Russia.¹¹³ That being said, several have maintained a cautious stance, balancing their relations between Russia and Ukraine.¹¹⁴ While these states do not support Russia's invasion of Ukraine, they have maintained relations through various ways.¹¹⁵ This includes Tajikistan allegedly providing Russia with Iranian attack drones which have been used in the war.¹¹⁶ While expressing concern over the conflict, they have refrained from overtly supporting either side, mindful of their economic dependence on Russia and the potential repercussions of antagonizing Moscow.¹¹⁷

The shifts in Ukraine's relations with its neighbors following Russia's invasion have broader implications for regional dynamics in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.¹¹⁸ The consolidation of support from Poland and other Eastern European countries sheds light on the

¹⁰⁶ Benjamin Potter, “Unrecognized Republic, Recognizable Consequences: Russian Troops in ‘Frozen’ Transnistria,” *Journal of Advanced Military Studies* 2022, no. special (March 16, 2022): 168–88, <https://doi.org/10.21140/mcu.j.2022SIstratcul010>; Locoman. “What’s Next for Ukraine’s (and Its Neighbors’) Domestic and Foreign Policy?”

¹⁰⁷ Locoman. “What’s Next for Ukraine’s (and Its Neighbors’) Domestic and Foreign Policy?”

¹⁰⁸ Locoman. “What’s Next for Ukraine’s (and Its Neighbors’) Domestic and Foreign Policy?”; Umarov, “Russia and Central Asia: Never Closer, or Drifting Apart?”

¹⁰⁹ Locoman. “What’s Next for Ukraine’s (and Its Neighbors’) Domestic and Foreign Policy?”; Umarov, “Russia and Central Asia: Never Closer, or Drifting Apart?”

¹¹⁰ Locoman. “What’s Next for Ukraine’s (and Its Neighbors’) Domestic and Foreign Policy?”

¹¹¹ Locoman. “What’s Next for Ukraine’s (and Its Neighbors’) Domestic and Foreign Policy?”

¹¹² Nikkei Staff Writers, “Kazakhstan Woos over 400 Western Firms Exiting Russia - Nikkei Asia,” *Nikkei Asia*, June 27, 2023, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/Ukraine-war/Kazakhstan-woos-over-400-Western-firms-exiting-Russia>; Locoman.

“What’s Next for Ukraine’s (and Its Neighbors’) Domestic and Foreign Policy?”

¹¹³ Umarov, “Russia and Central Asia: Never Closer, or Drifting Apart?”

¹¹⁴ Umarov, “Russia and Central Asia: Never Closer, or Drifting Apart?”; Locoman. “What’s Next for Ukraine’s (and Its Neighbors’) Domestic and Foreign Policy?”

¹¹⁵ Umarov, “Russia and Central Asia: Never Closer, or Drifting Apart?”; Locoman. “What’s Next for Ukraine’s (and Its Neighbors’) Domestic and Foreign Policy?”

¹¹⁶ Umarov, “Russia and Central Asia: Never Closer, or Drifting Apart?”

¹¹⁷ Umarov, “Russia and Central Asia: Never Closer, or Drifting Apart?”

¹¹⁸ Locoman. “What’s Next for Ukraine’s (and Its Neighbors’) Domestic and Foreign Policy?”

emergence of a unified front against Russian aggression.¹¹⁹ This solidarity not only strengthens Ukraine's position but also enhances regional stability by signaling a collective commitment to defend sovereignty and territorial integrity.¹²⁰ However, the alignment of Belarus with Russia highlights the risk of further destabilization in the region.¹²¹ The deepening ties between Moscow and Minsk could embolden Russian expansionism, exacerbating tensions and increasing the likelihood of conflict escalation.¹²² Moreover, the strategic recalibration of Central Asian states towards Ukraine reflects a broader geopolitical realignment in the region.¹²³ The erosion of Russia's influence in these countries could weaken Moscow's grip on the post-Soviet space, paving the way for increased competition for influence among regional powers.¹²⁴ Moving forward, navigating these shifting geopolitical currents will be crucial for Ukraine as it seeks to defend its sovereignty and pursue its Euro-Atlantic integration aspirations.

Policy Recommendations / Moving Forward

Trend Analysis

The geopolitical landscape of Eastern Europe has been marked by long standing tensions and complex dynamics, particularly in the relationship between Ukraine and its neighboring countries.¹²⁵ With historical grievances, divergent political alignments, and competing national interests, Ukraine faces the challenge of navigating its relations with neighbors while striving for regional stability and cooperation.¹²⁶ In this segment, we will suggest recommendations aimed at strengthening Ukraine's relations with its neighbors, considering the historical context and path dependencies that have shaped these interactions.

One of the cornerstone strategies for enhancing Ukraine's relations with its neighbors is prioritizing diplomatic engagement and confidence-building measures. Given the deep-rooted mistrust and historical animosities that have characterized relations in the region, establishing regular channels of communication and crisis management mechanisms is essential. By engaging in high-level dialogue and joint initiatives, Ukraine can rebuild trust and mitigate tensions with neighboring countries, including Russia, Belarus, Moldova, and Central Asian states. This could

¹¹⁹ Lawless. "Global impact: 5 ways war in Ukraine has changed the world."

¹²⁰ Lawless. "Global impact: 5 ways war in Ukraine has changed the world."

¹²¹ Masters, "The Belarus-Russia Alliance: An Axis of Autocracy in Eastern Europe"

¹²² Masters, "The Belarus-Russia Alliance: An Axis of Autocracy in Eastern Europe"

¹²³ Umarov, "Russia and Central Asia: Never Closer, or Drifting Apart?"

¹²⁴ Umarov, "Russia and Central Asia: Never Closer, or Drifting Apart?"; Locoman. "What's Next for Ukraine's (and Its Neighbors') Domestic and Foreign Policy?"

¹²⁵ Dugan. "Ukraine's Neighbors Grow More Accepting of Migrants"; Locoman. "What's Next for Ukraine's (and Its Neighbors') Domestic and Foreign Policy?"; Lawless. "Global impact: 5 ways war in Ukraine has changed the world."; Umarov, "Russia and Central Asia: Never Closer, or Drifting Apart?"

¹²⁶ Dugan. "Ukraine's Neighbors Grow More Accepting of Migrants"; Locoman. "What's Next for Ukraine's (and Its Neighbors') Domestic and Foreign Policy?"; Lawless. "Global impact: 5 ways war in Ukraine has changed the world."

include facilitating cross-border trade by simplifying customs procedures, a reality that already exists in some capacity, and harmonizing regulations, strengthening economic interdependence.¹²⁷

Another critical aspect of strengthening Ukraine's relations with neighbors is addressing historical grievances and sensitivities. Public statements and gestures of reconciliation can help alleviate lingering animosities and foster a sense of mutual understanding. Organizing joint cultural events, student exchanges, and language programs can foster mutual understanding that transcends political disagreements. This approach has proven successful in reducing tensions in other regions with historical conflicts such as Senegal. In their case, a period of deep persecution was followed by a push for the idea of “culture-peace”, promoting dialogue and healthy discourse.¹²⁸ Ukraine can also establish commissions for truth and reconciliation to accelerate the healing process for past sensitivities. Additionally, guaranteeing minority rights and cultural autonomy for ethnic groups within its borders demonstrates a commitment to inclusivity, a concern that should be shared by all states involved.¹²⁹

Another key aspect of the evolution of these systems would be the need for diplomatic efforts and international collaboration to rebuild trust and establish a foundation for cooperation. This includes addressing the root causes of the conflict, revisiting historical agreements, and engaging in dialogue that promotes understanding between the nations. Positive Peace principles can guide these efforts by encouraging transparency, inclusivity, and a commitment to shared prosperity. Economic reconstruction is a vital component of post-conflict recovery. Positive Peace principles can be applied to create an environment conducive to economic development. Collaborative efforts with international organizations and neighboring countries, guided by the principles of Positive Peace, can contribute to the rebuilding of economies and the creation of sustainable livelihoods as the conflict inches closer to a resolution.

Economic cooperation and integration initiatives represent another avenue for enhancing Ukraine's relations with neighbors. By prioritizing partnerships in trade, investment, and infrastructure development, Ukraine can foster mutual economic benefits and incentivize closer collaboration. Participating in regional economic forums and initiatives, such as the Eastern Partnership and the Eurasian Economic Union, can provide platforms for dialogue and cooperation on common economic interests. By aligning economic policies and promoting regional integration, Ukraine can strengthen ties with neighboring countries and contribute to regional stability and prosperity.

¹²⁷ Kateryna Chechel. n.d. “Trading across Borders Good Practices - Doing Business - World Bank Group.” Subnational Doing Business.

<https://subnational.doingbusiness.org/en/data/exploretopics/trading-across-borders/good-practices>.

¹²⁸“Cutting Edge | From Standing out to Reaching out: Cultural Diplomacy for Sustainable Development | UNESCO,” January 22, 2022,

<https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/cutting-edge-standing-out-reaching-out-cultural-diplomacy-sustainable-development>.

¹²⁹ OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Calls for End to Violence in Ukraine, Warns of Long-Term and Widespread Effects on National Minorities,” Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, March 30, 2022, <https://www.osce.org/hcnm/514859>.

Finally, Ukraine should actively engage in multilateral forums and regional integration initiatives to strengthen ties with neighbors and enhance regional cooperation. Platforms such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) provide opportunities for dialogue, conflict resolution, and cooperation on shared challenges. By participating in multilateral initiatives and promoting regional integration, Ukraine can play a constructive role in shaping the future of Eastern Europe and advancing mutual interests.

It's important to remember that Ukraine's optimal strategy with each of its neighbors will be unique. Tailoring policies to address the specific needs and challenges of each country is vital. Furthermore, the ongoing conflict with Russia remains a major factor in all relations. Demonstrating stability and a commitment to democratic values will be crucial for building trust. Strengthening Ukraine's relations with its neighbors requires a multifaceted approach that addresses historical grievances, promotes economic cooperation, enhances security collaboration, fosters people-to-people exchanges, and engages in multilateral initiatives. By prioritizing diplomatic engagement, confidence-building measures, and regional integration, Ukraine can build a foundation for enduring cooperation and stability in the region. As Ukraine navigates its relations with neighbors, it must remain mindful of the historical context and path dependencies that have shaped regional dynamics, while also embracing opportunities for positive change and mutual benefit. The following segments address specifics of how this approach can be applied through specific pillars. Through concerted efforts and strategic initiatives, Ukraine can forge a path forward towards a more peaceful, prosperous, and interconnected Eastern Europe.

Well-Functioning Government

Inherent to the Russia-Ukraine conflict is the handful of deep-rooted issues surrounding the Ukrainian identity and the Russian detestation of it.¹³⁰ However, Ukraine's unique ability to develop strong connections with the West and in consolidating Ukraine's civic identity, displays the important systems at play within the Ukrainian government.¹³¹

The IEP Positive Peace Report from 2022 implements a handful of metrics that would be helpful in evaluating the Positive Peace pillar of well-functioning government, which we have also discussed in this paper.¹³² The first would be corruption levels. Corruption in tandem with governance allows for the "operationalization" or measurement of well-functioning government.¹³³ With lower levels of corruption, we can anticipate a better functioning

¹³⁰ Korostelina and Toal, "The Dynamics of Identity in Ukrainians Living at the Front; Mankoff. "Russia's War in Ukraine: Identity, History, and Conflict."

¹³¹ Korostelina and Toal, "The Dynamics of Identity in Ukrainians Living at the Front"; Mankoff. "Russia's War in Ukraine: Identity, History, and Conflict."

¹³² Institute for Economics & Peace. "Positive Peace Report 2022"

¹³³ Institute for Economics & Peace. "Positive Peace Report 2022"

government.¹³⁴ Due to the particular governance difficulty as a result of the conflict in Ukraine, examining corruption in Ukraine can display insights on the impact of corruption levels on government effectiveness or societal trust. The IEP utilizes a diverse set of measures including The World Bank’s “Control of Corruption” indicator that helps to reflect the perceptions of corruption.¹³⁵ These data include surveys, expert assessments and comprehensive analysis of comparative corruption levels.¹³⁶

Another mechanism to look at the IEP’s pillar of well-functioning government is the “Acceptance of the Rights of Others.”¹³⁷ The pillar highlights the importance of societal acceptance and the enforcement of rights, particularly with minority and marginalized groups.¹³⁸ Thus, this metric would provide a comprehensive view of how inclusivity and human rights protection could be integrated into government practices. This is important in the context of a well-functioning government because inclusivity plays a role in how the government is able to facilitate its endeavors.¹³⁹ Moreover, it touches on aspects of equality in light of the law, as well as inclusion.¹⁴⁰ Metrics like the Freedom House measures and the Varieties of Democracy project offer information on different aspects of democracy and governance.¹⁴¹

Corruption

Often, conflict and corruption go hand in hand.¹⁴² According to Joseph Siegle, Director of Research in Africa Center for Strategic Studies at National Defense University, corruption and war are very strongly connected, as “half of countries in the bottom quartile of the Transparency International’s latest CPI are in conflict.”¹⁴³ Conflict can lead to corruption and that corruption within the system can represent an unstable government, which is more likely to lead to conflict with other countries.¹⁴⁴ It has been identified by the World Bank that “the likelihood of violent conflict increases when governments do not adequately prevent corruption or ensure justice.”¹⁴⁵

¹³⁴ Institute for Economics & Peace. “Positive Peace Report 2022”

¹³⁵ Institute for Economics & Peace. “Positive Peace Report 2022”

¹³⁶ Institute for Economics & Peace. “Positive Peace Report 2022”

¹³⁷ Institute for Economics & Peace. “Positive Peace Report 2022”

¹³⁸ Institute for Economics & Peace. “Positive Peace Report 2022”

¹³⁹ Institute for Economics & Peace. “Positive Peace Report 2022”

¹⁴⁰ Institute for Economics & Peace. “Positive Peace Report 2022”

¹⁴¹ Institute for Economics & Peace. “Positive Peace Report 2022”

¹⁴² Murat Sofuoglu, “Why War and Corruption Are Inseparable”,

<https://www.trtworld.com/magazine/why-war-and-corruption-are-inseparable-49816>; “Conflict at the Bottom - News” Transparency.org, January 29, 2019, <https://www.transparency.org/en/news/conflict-at-the-bottom>.

¹⁴³ Sofuoglu, “Why War and Corruption Are Inseparable”; “Conflict at the Bottom - News”

¹⁴⁴ Sofuoglu, “Why War and Corruption Are Inseparable”; “Conflict at the Bottom - News”

¹⁴⁵ “Conflict at the Bottom - News”

In regards to Russia and Ukraine, both countries were in decent positions on the CPI, despite the index not accurately reflecting the war. Ukraine has been improving with little steps, but that is not enough.¹⁴⁶

As the war tends to an end, there must be dialogue about the direction of both countries in relation to the CPI. Unfortunately, it is likely that the corruption rankings of both countries will worsen during the war.¹⁴⁷ According to Drago Kos, Chair of OECD Working Group on Bribery, it is believed that the corruption that existed prior to war is set to remain, as there is often a “loss of...anti-corruption infrastructure” and professional staff in conflict settings.¹⁴⁸

However, the period of reconstruction also leaves open the possibility of transformation and improvement. When two countries are able to “restart,” it leaves leverage for international organizations and other official representatives to help implement a stronger culture of anti-corruption. On the other hand, it is complicated to do so, and has a higher chance of achieving worse rankings in Transparency International’s CPI for both countries.¹⁴⁹ Thus, a conjunct action should be put forth, along with Russia and Ukraine, but also other countries and international organizations, such as the United Nations.

Free Flow of Information

As Ukraine continues to handle Russian interference, it is important to note their use of soft power that led to significant support from Western states.¹⁵⁰ When the invasion of Russia took place in February of 2022, Ukraine quickly garnered respect from Western countries as the small, relatively new nation displayed the ability to fend themselves from complete Russian occupation. As distinguished by the actions taken by the US, international assistance is a key part of Ukraine’s success in continuing to prosper after the war as they move post-combat.¹⁵¹ Therefore, looking forward, it is noticeable to consider this act of resilience as a means of continuing international cooperation regarding cybersecurity and intelligence support for greater access to free flow of information.¹⁵² To this end, Vivian S. Walker, the Executive Director of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Public Diplomacy expresses her belief that “post-Maidan Ukraine is, ultimately, a testament to the power of its citizenry to bring about peaceful change. The

¹⁴⁶ Karatnycky. “How Deep Does Corruption Run in Ukraine?”; Dickinson. “Wartime Ukraine Ranks among World’s Top Performers in Anti-Corruption Index

¹⁴⁷ Jonas Lindberg and Camilla Orjuela, “Corruption in the Aftermath of War: An Introduction,” *Third World Quarterly* 35, no. 5 (2014): 723–36; Drago Kos, “War and Corruption in Ukraine,” *European Criminal Law Association Forum*, no. 2 (June 14, 2022): 152–57.

¹⁴⁸ Kos, “War and Corruption in Ukraine”

¹⁴⁹ Lindberg and Orjuela, “Corruption in the Aftermath of War: An Introduction,”; Kos, “War and Corruption in Ukraine”

¹⁵⁰ Vivian Walker. “State Narratives in Complex Media Environments: The Case of Ukraine.” Washington DC: Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, 2015.

<https://isd.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2022/03/Case-331.pdf>.

¹⁵¹ Skidmore et al. “Financing and Governing the Recovery, Reconstruction, and Modernization of Ukraine.”; “U.S. Support for Connectivity and Cybersecurity in Ukraine.”

¹⁵² “U.S. Support for Connectivity and Cybersecurity in Ukraine.”

ongoing, government-wide reform process is an expression of that power. And finally, Ukraine's future is tied to Europe and the West as a strong, viable partner with shared strategic values."¹⁵³ Therefore, we can consider Ukraine's soft power as a tool that can be influential in continuing support as debate surrounding whether further monetary aid for the war is feasible.

As determined by the aforementioned data, the free flow of information contributes significantly to a more peaceful community, political legitimacy and the ability to communicate, especially in a time of war.¹⁵⁴ Though Ukraine has suffered significant damages to its networks and digital communication, policies put in place and actions taken to help combat these interceptions have proved significant in improving technology and its efficiency.¹⁵⁵ Looking at post-war relations with Russia, initiatives taken to rebuild and continue to improve Ukraine's ability to overcome interception of information can be exponentially beneficial to their development as a nation beyond a time of war, but also economically.¹⁵⁶ As a result, it is important to recognize the aid that contributes to these necessary technological advancements.¹⁵⁷ Ukraine's timeliness to respond to Russian interference and ability to quickly adapt to necessary technological advancements, with the support of allies, represents a nation with prosperous possibilities given their continued allyship with nations capable of supporting further cybersecurity. Persistent use of soft power is going to be a determining factor in allowing free flow of information in Ukraine, as further assistance rests upon Ukraine's ability to continue being resilient.

¹⁵³ Walker. "State Narratives in Complex Media Environments: The Case of Ukraine."

¹⁵⁴ Institute for Economics & Peace. "Positive Peace Report 2022"

¹⁵⁵ "U.S. Support for Connectivity and Cybersecurity in Ukraine."

¹⁵⁶ Skidmore et al. "Financing and Governing the Recovery, Reconstruction, and Modernization of Ukraine."

¹⁵⁷ Skidmore et al. "Financing and Governing the Recovery, Reconstruction, and Modernization of Ukraine."; "U.S. Support for Connectivity and Cybersecurity in Ukraine."

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